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EARLY ENTRANCE STUDENTS GAIN VALUABLE CREDIT & EXPERIENCE

Although ACT college exam scores for the high school class of 2007 rose slightly compared with last year, educators still worry that too many students start their first year of college unprepared for that level of learning.

Acknowledging the improvement in scores reported this month by ACT's producers, US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said, "More than half of all test-takers still fell short of the College Readiness Benchmarks. This is unacceptable when 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs require at least some post-secondary education."

Among other recommendations, Spellings advised the states to "increase access to rigorous coursework" for high schoolers so they will acquire "the critical skills they need to succeed."

In the Potomac Highlands, high school students already enjoy increased access to challenging college-level courses through Eastern WV Community and Technical College's Early Entrance program. "Many of our courses offer dual credit," said Pam Shrader, Eastern's program manager for secondary school partnerships, "so students can complete their high school requirements and earn college credit at the same time." Last fall, 216 students in six counties took advantage of Eastern's Early Entrance program. Enrollment is still open for several fall semester classes.

Saves Money

By registering for these classes through Eastern, high school juniors and seniors sharpen their learning skills in courses that require them to work at the college level, and get a jump start in their college careers. By earning college credit in a variety of general education courses at Eastern's reduced tuition for high school students, they also save money.

"And all of our Early Entrance and dual credit classes in Algebra, English, History, Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Biology and Chemistry transfer one-for-one to any college or university in West Virginia," Shrader noted. The statewide 'Core Coursework Transfer Agreement of 2007-2008' guarantees students that transfer equivalence, she said.

Some students find the learning experience in Eastern's Early Entrance classes so impressive that they decide to continue at the local college to complete their general education requirements, and earn an Associate degree at the same time. "Then they enter the job market with an Associate degree, or transfer their Eastern degree credits towards a four-year diploma."

Proven Record

Many students transfer the Eastern credits they earn in high school to another college immediately after graduation. "So when they enter their first day of classes on campus, they find themselves several giant steps ahead of their classmates," Shrader

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pointed out, “because they’ve already proven themselves at the college level and already built a significant record of college achievement.”

For more information about Eastern’s Early Entrance program, financial aid opportunities, programs of study and workforce and community education, call toll free: 877-982-2322; or check the College’s website: “www.eastern.wvnet.edu”.

Serving the residents of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton and Tucker counties, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College is a comprehensive and equal opportunity community and technical college bringing the resources and assets of Education That Works to the families, communities and employers of the Potomac Highlands.